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VOLUME 1

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A Report to the Superintendent of Boston Public Schools

by

The Boston Commission on Secondary Education

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MOVING FORWARD

A Report to the Superintendent of Boston Public Schools
on the First Year Activities (1973-1974)

of

The Boston Commission on Secondary Education

April, 1974

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Volume I

Summary of Interim Commission Report and Recommendations

The School Committee of the City of Boston

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Paul J. Ellison
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The first year of the Commission's activity has been
erously supported by:

The Ford Foundation

The Committee for the Permanent Charities

The Riley Trust

The Boston Urban Observatory,
University of Massachusetts at Boston

VOLUME I

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Members of the Boston Commission on Secondary Education

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MOVING FORWARD

Moving Forward is a four-volume interim report submitted to the Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools by the Boston Commission on Secondary Education. It is the result of a one-year preliminary study of secondary education in Boston. Each volume of the interim report addresses a particular aspect of Commission activity:

VOLUME I — Summary of Interim Commission Report
A condensation of the Volume II Interim Report approved by the membership of the Commission.

VOLUME II — Interim Commission Report and Recommendations
Approved by the membership of the Commission.

VOLUME III — Commission Working Papers: Reports of Committees
Committee reports are the work and the responsibility of each individual committee and have not been approved by the Commission as a whole.

A. Goals
B. Space and Facilities
C. Options and Alternatives
D. City Resources
E. Governance and Change
F. Career Education

VOLUME IV — Commission Working Papers: Commission Documents
Documents prepared by individuals and particular committees, not the Commission as a whole.

A. A Proposal to the Ford Foundation
B. Secondary School Population: 1980
C. Pilot Project Proposals

1. CASES
2. Theatre in the Schools
3. WALLOP
4. Report on Teacher Grant Projects

Members and Alternate Members

of the

Boston Commission on Secondary Education

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I. Purpose and Organization of the Commission

A. Aims of the Commission

The Boston Commission on Secondary Education was officially created by the Boston School Committee in April of 1973 for the express purpose of developing new directions for the middle and high schools of the City of Boston. The original idea of establishing such a commission was first proposed by Boston's Superintendent of Schools, Dr. William J. Leary, in his inaugural speech as Superintendent in September, 1972.

The Commission's assigned tasks were the following:

1. Examine the current operations of the secondary schools of Boston to discover the most pressing needs of students, teachers, parents and administrators and devise ways of making sure that every student, regardless of his or her economic, racial or ethnic status, has an equal chance to obtain the educational benefits offered by the system.
2. Examine, assess and generate alternative secondary models which:
   a. facilitate the development in students of an ability to attain levels of success commensurate with their potential; and

b. provide new experiences and new learning environments which enhance the development of self, personal growth and social commitment.

3. Develop a central vehicle for effectively supporting change at the local school level.

4. Introduce one or more pilot programs which present students with informed and meaningful choices.

5. Analyze in depth the process by which existing or new high school populations are assisted in redesigning their programs with a view to developing pragmatic recommendations for secondary school staffs and their communities interested in effecting change.

I. Recommendations of the Commission

[Listed after the recommendations are the names of the members of the Board of Superintendents of the Boston Public Schools or individuals otherwise identified. The Commission feels these are the individuals who should be addressed to implement the respective recommendations.]

A. General Principles

The following set of general principles or "value statements" reflect the basic attitudes that the Commission achieved by consensus during its first year of operation

and feels are necessary to have if the City of Boston and its school system are to emerge from the difficult years ahead with their customary vigor and civility not only intact but strengthened.

1. Equality of Educational Opportunity

   The Commission believes that integration in terms of race, creed, socio-economic status and sex is essential to any acceptable and broadly defined educational system.

2. Organizing for the Delivery of Equal Opportunity

   The Commission officially accepts as a basis of its own work a school system organized on a K-5, 6-8, 9-12 basis.

   The Commission further believes that the central schools offering specialized curricula have an important role to play within a much broadened range of options in the City system of high schools.

3. Governance of the Secondary School Community

   The Commission believes that students experience difficulty in learning how to function as adults in a democratic society when secondary schools are not themselves examples of democracy

in action. Indeed, the development of the skills of democratic action which have been slighted in some secondary schools and colleges might help American society to function better as a democracy.

This will require a careful study and definition of the rights, responsibilities and proper role of each of the constituent parties.

4. Equal Attention to Middle Schools

The Commission believes that middle schools deserve equal attention and consideration. During its second year of activity, the Commission intends to address the entire middle school concept in great detail with emphasis on programming. Additionally, a study of middle school facilities is recommended.

5. Financial Consequences

In general and in its pilot programs in particular, the Commission has attempted to follow a rule that recommended changes should essentially be reallocations of existing funds or patterns of funding and not outright escalation of the public tax money spent on schools. This has clearly not been possible in all cases, but the rule still holds.

(The five principles above are directed to the attention of the Board of Superintendents.)

B. The Goals of Secondary Education in Boston

The goals described here are -- or should be considered as -- preliminary rather than final or unchangeable statements. Indeed, the Commission as a whole is still in the process of debating many of the finer points of individual statements. This is a process we see continuing throughout the life of the Commission, a process in which not only the Commission but the broader public should be engaged.

1. The Aims of Education

a. One responsibility of secondary education is to prepare students to function in a democratic society. Therefore, students themselves must operate in a democratic fashion which will contribute to the students' ability to make decisions successfully within the larger society. This means developing alternative models of school governance that include parents, teachers and students. (Board of Superintendents)

b. Students need to learn how to solve problems in a constructive, valid, realistic fashion. Therefore, secondary schools need to reorganize their approach to education and eliminate the barriers which separate schools from the general activity of society. (J. Kelly)

2. The Educational Requirments of Students

a. Each student has particular talents and capabilities. This means developing a wider variety of schools, programs and curricula and making it possible for each student to select the kind of schooling that best meets his or her needs and talents. (J. Kelly)

b. Students need to have a certain level of competence in basic skills in order to function successfully in society. Therefore, it is an obligation of secondary education to make it possible for students to acquire those skills. (J. Kelly)

3. Equal Educational Opportunity

a. All students should have equal access to the opportunities afforded by secondary education. Therefore, the school system must provide equal educational opportunity and quality education in settings characterized by sexual, racial and economic integration. (Board of Superintendents)

b. A secondary school system must assure each student of equal treatment, equal opportunity and due process. (Board of Superintendents)

4. Governance and Communication

Education should be a cooperative effort among schools, students and parents. Therefore, those interest groups (administrators, students, teachers and parents) must communicate with each other and make decisions together. This necessitates the strengthening of mechanisms to accomplish these goals without abrogating the collective bargaining processes. (C. Leftwich)

5. Supportive Services

a. Schools are concerned about the intellectual, physical, social and emotional development of each student as well as his or her academic achievement. Therefore, a sharing of this task with other public and private institutions may be in the best interests of the schools. (A. Casey)

b. A healthy child is better able to participate in educational activities than one who is not. Students and/or parents should be made aware of a complete comprehensive health care program, and appropriate treatment and facilities should be made available, including psychiatric counseling. (M. Fahey)

c. Special consideration should be given to the question of guidance services in both the middle schools and the high schools. The following areas should receive particular attention:

(1) Conditions of high pupil-counselor ratios and almost total lack of functional support must be remedied if guidance counselors are to provide the needed services for which they are responsible.

(2) Guidance services must be provided equitably for all students.

(3) The student should have all possible assistance to learn about and be counseled concerning the various options that are open to him or to her.

(4) At the middle school level, as at the high school, career guidance should receive a proper portion of the total guidance attention. (A. Casey)

6. Role of Professional Educators: Teachers and Administrators

a. The teaching staff of any school system comprises its greatest strength. Therefore, that system

must develop ways of recruiting, hiring and retaining the most qualified people for all positions. (P. Kennedy)

b. Teachers must be involved in school decisions: governance; textbook and materials selection; recommending desired changes in the standards to be used in granting tenure; selecting department heads, assistant principals, principals, etc. (J. Kelly, P. Kennedy and C. Leftwich)

c. A way of rewarding skilled teachers which will encourage them to continue to function in a teaching relationship must be devised. (P. Kennedy)

7. Career Development

The barriers among vocational, business and academic education should be broken. All students should be assured of the opportunity to continue their formal education if desired and to acquire the vocational skills needed to obtain employment. (C. Leftwich)

C. Organization of the High Schools and Basic Space Needs

The Commission's population projections for the City's secondary schools indicate that by 1980 the secondary schools (but limited almost entirely to the high schools)

will be faced with a need for 6,000 additional seats, as conventionally defined. This does not mean that the present high school age population will grow by that amount between now and 1980. It is based, rather, on several major facts and assumptions (see Volume IV, Section II).

In light of various factors and projected costs, the Commission makes the following recommendations:

1. That the City and the School Committee proceed as rapidly as possible to construct the five high school projects already committed (Stage I of Campus High, Charlestown, the two parts of Southwest Central and the Occupational Resource Center). (C. Leftwich and R. Vey, Director of Public Facilities)
2. That the City and the School Committee declare a moratorium on further high school construction in Boston beyond the five schools already committed. There would be two possible exceptions to this moratorium:
   a. the possible construction of a 1,250-student district high school somewhere in the Southeast Corridor of the City.
   b. the possible construction of a new facility to replace the space presently occupied by the central school facility in Codman Square.

   (C. Leftwich and R. Vey)

3. That the problem of how to provide the needed 6,000 additional high school seats be solved basically by the development and construction of a series of racially balanced city-wide resource centers open to students from all of the City's schools who would attend such centers on a part-time basis as they voluntarily choose to do so. These resource centers should be of two essential types:

   a. Central Resource Centers

      These centers would be self-sufficient facilities built, equipped and operated to serve special curricular needs.

   b. Cooperative Resource Centers

      These centers would be established using existing space whenever possible and constructing additional spaces whenever necessary within or adjacent to specific resource institutions of the City. (J. Kelly and C. Leftwich)

4. That the basic secondary school system in Boston (as stated in the general principles) include:

   a. district, racially balanced, home base middle and high schools with a strengthened academic program;

b. central schools, racially balanced, limited in number and enrollment and existing as specialized options with a much expanded range based primarily in the district schools;

c. central and cooperative resource centers, programmatically planned to attract a racially and sexually balanced population;

d. an expanded Flexible Campus Program operating in every high school. (W. Harrison and J. Kelly)

5. The Commission recommends a revision of the master schedules of the secondary schools and the development of new, flexible scheduling procedures in order to make the proposed home base, resource center and flexible campus organizations work. (M. Fahey and W. Harrison)

6. The Commission also recommends that the school system and the Public Facilities Department actively continue to explore and to expand the planning for a variety of other alternative ways of solving the secondary school space problem. These include the following:

a. The concept of <u>joint occupancy</u> -- the building of school space in conjunction with other facets of the City's life -- should be explored.

b. The concept of joint occupancy leads naturally to the idea of not building facilities solely devoted to schooling but to school/community centers in which a variety of educational and community activities would take place.

c. The use of existing non-school buildings as educational facilities should be expanded.

d. The schedules of existing and future secondary schools (especially high schools) should be altered to enable education to take place year-round, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., both for secondary students and for adults. (C. Leftwich and R. Vey, Director of Public Facilities)

7. The Commission also recommends the establishment of a better cooperative mechanism for the present and future planning of school facilities and programs in the City of Boston. (C. Leftwich and R. Vey)

D. Expansion of Options and Using the Resources of the Larger Community

The Commission feels that while the range of options currently available to secondary students is broad but not well-advertised, the range is still not sufficient.

The Commission is concerned also with increasing the range of options available to the so-called "general" students in the district high schools.

The Commission recommends at least five ways in which the desired broader range of options for all students can be achieved:

1. The establishment of the resource center network would make available to all students specialized facilities and resources that are not going to be available within any single secondary school. (J. Kelly and C. Leftwich)
2. Sub-schools, or schools-within-schools that offer a special kind of program and are open to students who voluntarily choose them on an integrated basis, should be established. (J. Kelly)
3. The expansion of the Flexible Campus Program would enable individual students to use the larger community as their school. (J. Kelly)
4. Special programs, home based in each district high school, should be established to provide clear and special links between these high schools and the area's public and private colleges. (M. Fahey)

5. The expansion of the general career education opportunities available in the secondary system, building upon already extensive and increasingly popular business education and vocational courses now operating, should be pursued. (C. Leftwich)

E. Making the Secondary School System More Democratic

The Commission believes that those organizations that are directly associated with the school system should be examined with a view toward increasing democratic participation in school governance. Models that will assist in attaining democratic process should be studied.

1. School Advisory Councils

School Advisory Councils can provide new opportunities for participation in school governance for students, teachers, parents and other public groups. Effective Councils should represent those most directly affected by educational decisions and this can best be accomplished through cooperation with existing organizations.

(Board of Superintendents)

2. Home and School Association and Students' Advisory Council

On a city-wide basis, the roles of the Home and School Association and the Students' Advisory Council

also need to be clarified to school personnel and the public. (Board of Superintendents)

3. Other Recommendations

As part of this overall reexamination of the governance structure of schools and the question of city-wide parent and student groups, the following possibilities should be investigated:

a. the use of the "ombudsman" both in individual secondary schools and in the school system as a whole; (Board of Superintendents)

b. the feasibility of alternate governance structures for secondary schools: for example, the consequences of greater fiscal autonomy or lump-sum budgets under the control of a School Advisory Council which includes the chief administrator, parents, teachers, students and public members; (Board of Superintendents)

c. the implementation of an accredited course in each high school and middle school which deals with matters of education and school governance as legitimate parts of the secondary curriculum. (J. Kelly)

4. Additional Commission Recommendations

a. The Commission should be used to the maximum extent possible to prepare for the September,

1974, opening of secondary schools in the City of Boston. Furthermore, the Commission should offer its services to the School Committee to aid in the design of learning environments and opportunities for the schools affected by the court-mandated changes. This planning assistance should emphasize city-based activities that will expand the program offerings available to Boston secondary school students.

(C. Leftwich)

b. A program modification should be undertaken that would allow vocational education students to receive their diploma at the conclusion of the senior year of high school. (C. Leftwich)

c. The Commission on Secondary Education, through the staff or a subgroup of Commission members, should be informed about progress in implementation of the Promotional Rating System.

(C. Leftwich)

III. Pilot Programs

The Commission recommends that the following pilot programs be undertaken immediately by the School Department with Commission assistance if such is desired:

A. the establishment of at least one large-scale coeducational pilot ORC program at Boston Trade High School; (C. Leftwich)

B. the development and pilot testing in at least one school of a truly flexible scheduling model aimed at making all available options more workable and using the enlarged pilot ORC and other similar pilots as cooperating entities; (W. Harrison)

C. the evaluation of and, if warranted, the continuation, expansion and further development of the four pilot programs designed with Commission assistance (CASES, Theatre in the Schools, WALLOP and MATH), and the further development of similar projects; (J. Kelly)

D. the immediate development of a pilot career and academic advancement project cooperatively implemented with an institution of higher education and a high school; (M. Fahey)

E. the development of an academically accredited model industrial and practical arts program in a district high school which would be open to students of both sexes and would combine industrial arts, home economics, practical electrical and plumbing skills, woodworking, graphic arts, metal work and electronics; (C. Leftwich)

F. the development of a model guidance program in at least one middle school and its receiving high school; (A. Casey)

G. the development of several possible solutions to the transportation problems created in the operation of resource centers, using the pilot ORC and the Commission's four pilot projects as working examples; (M. Fahey)

H. the development and piloting, in conjunction with the School Department, of ways in which resource centers can be jointly staffed by Boston teachers and institution personnel; (P. Kennedy)

I. the development of a special planning and coordination mechanism to explore all resource center possibilities, set priorities, resolve remaining problems (such as staffing, etc.) and eliminate or at least reduce the duplication and overlap that presently exist in both the City and the metropolitan area in relation to the planning of such centers. This perhaps should take the form of a special planning group or task force set up under the sponsorship of the School Committee, the Superintendent and the Commission. It should include representatives of the central administrative staff,

the Educational Planning Center, the Public Facilities Department, the Mayor's Office, the State Department of Education, the Metropolitan Cultural Alliance (representing the City's major cultural institutions), the Commission, representatives from the business community, parents, teachers and students; (C. Leftwich)

J. the further development of peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring for academic credit. (J. Kelly)

IV. Appendix

Summary of Interim Report
Teacher Grants Project
March, 1974

Background

The initial impetus for movement towards Superintendent William J. Leary's goal of an "aesthetically-oriented" experience for all Boston's students was the funding by the Ford Foundation of a Secondary School Commission. A ten-thousand-dollar portion of that grant was reserved for the Superintendent's use in a Teacher Grants Project.

A Teacher Grants Committee was formed which consisted of classroom teachers, principals and headmasters, supportive service department administrators, parents, representatives of external cultural agencies and a member of the Secondary School Commission Executive Board.

This committee, chaired by Mr. Robert P. Carroll of the Department of Staff Development, met on January 16, 1974, and formulated objectives and processes for the program. Among the major decisions on which consensus was reached were:

1. to make a determined effort to place resources in the hands of teachers as soon as possible during the remainder of this school year;

2. to allocate $4000 for disbursement to grantees during the Spring of 1974 and to reserve $6000 for the school year 1974-1975;

3. to consider applications for grants in amounts between $50 and $900;

4. to define "aesthetic and cultural" in the broadest terms.

By the March 1, 1974, deadline for submission, seventy different proposals were received from classroom teachers. The proposals submitted covered a wide range of individual student activities in many artistic disciplines from wood engraving and mural painting to floriculture and specific cultural and ethnic research. The grants amounted to $4200.90, with an average of $262.00 per grant.

The teacher and student activities made possible by this project involved all levels of instruction: primary, elementary, middle school and senior high. There appeared also a surprisingly natural distribution of grantees from all geographic sections of the City of Boston.

Issues Raised by the Project

The process of implementing this first direct teacher grants program in the history of the Boston School System provided an opportunity for a broad systems analysis. Some of the observations and findings were:

1. A feeling exists among creative teachers that had some discretionary funding been available earlier without involvement of bureaucratic "red tape," they long ago would have provided greater enrichment of their classroom instruction.

2. A much greater capacity for innovation and creativity exists among classroom teachers in matters regarding curriculum and teaching strategies than has been heretofore formally tapped.

3. There exists even among experienced teachers a definite lack of knowledge of materials available through regular channels for creative and innovative classroom activities.

4. There exists among school staffs a lack of knowledge of or a reluctance to approach many supportive service departments for professional advice.

5. Generally, the teaching staff is unfamiliar with the process of drafting even a simple educational proposal.

6. There is developing in Boston schools an increased acceptance both by teachers and students, at least on the secondary level, of interdisciplinary instruction.

Recommendations

1. Funding should be sought from both internal and external sources for the continuation of the Teacher Grants Program. In addition efforts should be pursued to seek funding for a similar program of direct grants to school principals and headmasters for implementation of innovative programs within the individual schools.

2. The problem-solving abilities exhibited by many teachers would justify the reexamination of the operations of major supportive service departments as to cost-effectiveness and relevancy to student and teacher needs.

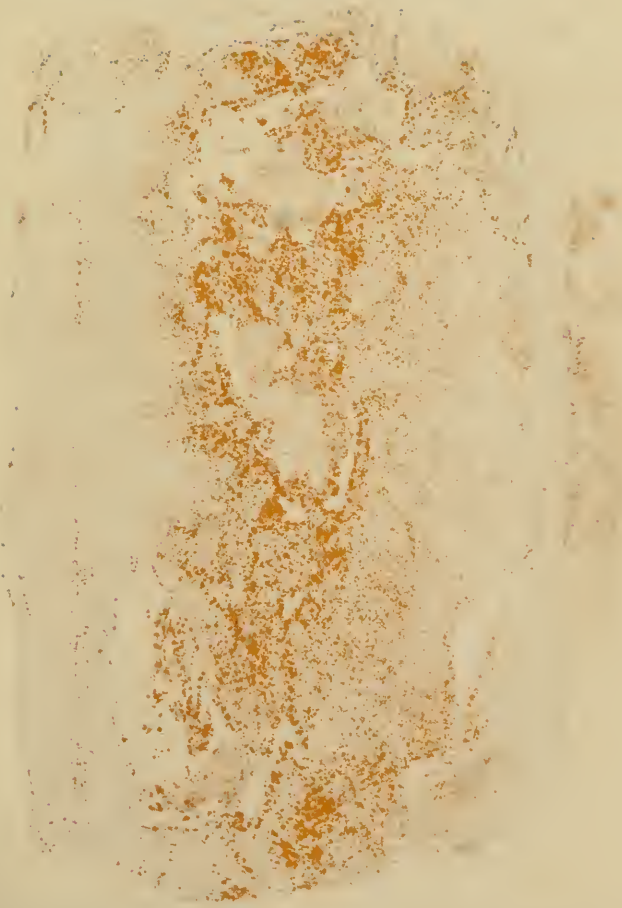
3. A Teachers Handbook describing the supportive services available along with other career planning information should be revised and reissued. Also, comprehensive and continuing orientation for classroom teachers as to what materials and services are readily available should be increased.

4. The members of the Department of Staff Development should be encouraged to pursue on a programmatic level an active "brokerage and consulting" role with school administrators and teachers.

5. More Boston teachers should receive training in seeking assistance for creative and innovative teaching from both in-system and external sources (proposal writing).

6. School administrators should encourage exploration of interdisciplinary teaching techniques and organizational patterns.

The complete Interim Report on the Teacher Grants Project may be found in Volume IV of Moving Forward.



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